

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

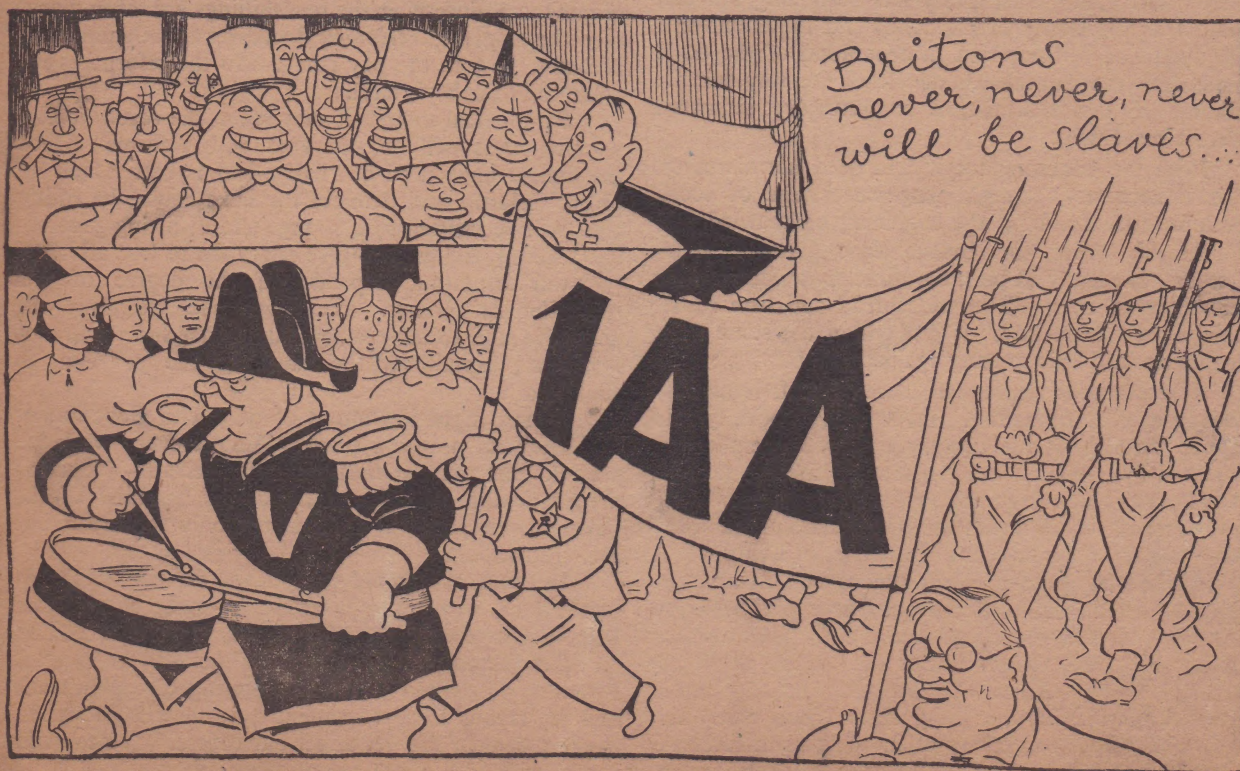
AFTER THE WAR

AS THE WAR drags through its fifth year the minds of men turn with keener realism to that uncertain and perilous time the "post-war period". During the early years of the war optimistic prophecy was dominant—"this time the boys will not come back to the dole queue." From our observation and hearing that easy mood is being rapidly dissipated by the approach of a doubtful peace. Lest there be some who form their judgment, not by observing life, but entirely by the evidence of books, we refer to the "Mass Observation" volume *The Journey Home*, War-time Survey, prepared for the Advertising Service Guild (John Murray, 6s.) published last week.

Claiming to have made a wide and representative

survey in all classes, men and women, civilians and forces, "Mass Observation" reports a sinking of the level of "hope" and "expectation" during the last three years. On the subjects of unemployment, social service, education and reforms the people express, not what they expect, but what they would like. Fear of the future has taken the place of light-hearted, light-headed hope. Spoken or unspoken, each man's fear is that National Victory means Personal Defeat.

Certainly the experience and accounts of everyday life in Britain in the years which followed the Armistice give the workers little foundation for hope. Nor do recent policies and tendencies indicate any fundamental change in the intention of the ruling class. The last



post-war period brought unemployment and reduction of out-of-work pay (from 29s. to 15s.) lock-outs and savage wage cuts and most scandalous of all, the most cynical and callous treatment of out-of-work and disabled ex-service men.

Yet, the blows of those post-war years were softened by certain factors which are now absent. Trade unions, in spite of unscientific organisation, still functioned for a while as centres of resistance, witness the successful railway strike of 1919. The shop steward movement of the war period still flourished and Continental insurrection raised revolutionary hope.

Now, the trade unions, personified by Bevin and TAA, have reached the last stage of corruption. The old shop stewards' movement is replaced by a Communist set of imposters who have identified the name of shop steward with that of spies and informers, windbags and place hunters. In place of the reformist or revolutionary hopes of the workers of 1919 there is now everywhere deep cynicism.

In spite of these hard facts which we must face, we know that the days of uncertainty which will follow this war will be days of opportunity to the working class and the revolutionary movement. No longer can millions of workers be deceived by the hope of a Labour Government. Before their eyes, in the acts of Morrison, Bevin and others, is the evidence of what "Labour in Power" means. No alternative party with the sentimental appeal of Labour exists to take its place. The Communist Party has been long self-discredited as the lackey of Churchill and the employers. The open and self-imposed incorporation of the trade unions into the capitalist state clears the way for the building of a Syndicalist, a revolutionary industrial unionist movement.

Even the widespread cynicism need not alarm us. It is a necessary, though dangerous, stage of social development. Doubt is the beginning of knowledge.

Already there are obvious signs that the youth of to-day are likely to be more difficult to control than were those of 1919. The widespread and firm resistance of the "Bevin boys" is just one of the stone walls for ministerial heads to bang against.

The post-war depression feared by all is already showing itself in miniature. Overtime has been largely stopped throughout the country by government order, while the "pay-as-you-earn" system of income tax deducts heavier sums from the worker's pay packet. The "no-overtime" order shows the rotten state of war-time "high wages". To meet the rising cost of living workers snatched at Sunday work; the cost of living continued to rise and a seven day week became a necessity for millions. The closing of munition factories and reduction of staff in others brings the spectre of unemployment before millions of workers. Ex-servicemen after being wounded are being offered jobs below the average of wages earned by other workers, a foretaste of the general post-war treatment of ex-servicemen.

Little wonder that cynical smiles from the army ranks greet the vague and windy promises of politicians. There are signs that the serviceman of to-day will rely more on his own efforts than on politician's honour or charity merchant's condescension.

It should be increasingly easy for Anarchists to demonstrate that only an economy based on the social ownership of the means of production by workers' control can solve the social problems which the War has violently suppressed and which the "Peace" will release in more violent form. The War came because of the violent contradiction of capitalist production and capitalist property relations. The War, contrary to the prophecies of the Lefts and according to the foresight of revolutionaries, has solved no problem but has aggravated many.

But there are those who say, "we cannot wait until the revolution; while the grass is growing the horse is starving. We must seek reforms to feed the unemployed, for example."

To them we reply, "reforms are not given to those who are most reformist, but to those who are most revolutionary." Many times we have listened to Labour Party speakers telling us that Lloyd George justified his Unemployment Insurance Act as "insurance against revolution." Undoubtedly, the higher the revolutionary mood of the workers, the higher will be the scale of unemployment benefit. If the unemployed are content to demand, not the socialisation of industry, but a few bob on the dole a few shillings may be granted. A little later the few shillings are taken away, then the slogan of reformist Socialists and Communists becomes "restore the pay cuts". So the reformists revolve their donkey's circle.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the revolutionary working class will be showered with reforms. Once the masses have tired of "half-a-loaf is better than no bread" reforms and demand the bake-house the ruling class will be smitten by a strange and ill-fitting generosity. Better, to them, to give part than to lose all. Our post-war condition depends on the degree of our revolutionary fervour. But, even such reforms will not solve the social problem and Anarchism will not rest until capitalism, the cause of the problem, is abolished.

A hard fight lies ahead of us. The Government has made its post-war plans. Almost every week we are told that the war measures must remain—conscription, rationing, the Home Guard, the Essential Works Order. Our post-war fight is not only for bread but also for freedom.

In spite of any adverse factor we can win that battle if we will. The workers can make of post-war Britain what they wish. The greatest factor, exceeding all other factors, in any struggle is the Will to Victory. Rejecting all baited reforms, despising oily politicians and fat labour leaders, content only to win possession of the means of life, let us set our course. We can win if we will. "We are many, they are few."

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

CHURCHILL BACKS FRANCO

WAR COMMENTARY has always insisted, ever since the very first weeks of the war, that the British ruling

class (or any other ruling class for that matter) were incapable of fighting a war against Fascism. Their whole record had shown them to be only too-favourable towards Fascism. In the Editorial article in our last issue, we drew attention to the fascists who have been alternately quislings for Hitler and then the tools of the Allies. It mattered little to us that Churchill was always repeating that the objective of the war was the "extirpation of Fascism, root and branch", and suchlike phrases. Deeds speak louder than words; and seeing the trends in this country, we were not impressed; remembering the policy of Churchill, of the National Government, and of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. towards Fascism between the two wars, we were not impressed.

Now Mr. Churchill comes to the defence of General Franco. "I have no sympathy," he declared on May 4th, "with those who think it clever and even funny to insult and abuse the Government of Spain whenever occasion serves."

General Franco's murderous régime climbed to power over the dead bodies of more than a million Spanish workers; thousands of lovers of freedom from countries all over the world fought in Spain to prevent his régime of terror and hunger from establishing itself. Underground in Spain the fight against Franco goes on still. Hundreds of thousands have been killed by Franco's firing squads and the garotte which he revived in the five years since his victory. The victory to which he was assisted by Hitler and Mussolini and the National Government of Baldwin and Chamberlain—the Government which Churchill now leads in the same path. There are still a million men rotting in Franco's prisons and concentration camps.

There is nothing funny about the struggle against the Fascist hangman of Spain. Our comrades of the Spanish Anarchist movement set an example of anti-fascist heroism to the world in those first days after July 19th, 1936, in the siege of Madrid, and the three long weary years of betrayals that followed. Churchill's petulant outburst against "abusing" Franco's government means less than nothing to us.

GLASGOW

ANTI-LABOUR LAWS VICTIMS' DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The Arrest and Trial of Militant Workers PROTEST DEMONSTRATION

ST. ANDREW'S HALLS

SUNDAY 11th JUNE, 1944.

Doors open 6.30 — Commence 7 p.m.

Speakers:

JAMES MAXTON, M.P.

JOHN Mc GOVERN, M.P. AGIT ROY (R.C.P.)

HOARE-LAVAL AGAIN

appeasers of Fascism. The most flagrant example of appeasement was the free hand given to Hitler, Mussolini and Franco in stifling the Spanish working class by the National Government—all in the cause of "preserving law and order" of course. Churchill supported first Mussolini and then Hitler when they came to power; now he has joined Chamberlain and Co. in appeasing Franco.

In his speech he warmly praised the work done by Sir Samuel Hoare. It was Hoare whose activity originally gave rise to the term "appeasement"—in 1935 when he prepared the infamous Hoare-Laval pact for the partitioning of Abyssinia during Mussolini and Badoglio's Abyssinian War. He is a worthy right hand man for Churchill.

Churchill is not the only one who takes it upon himself to tell us whom we may or may not criticize. Tom Driberg, formerly Beaverbrook's "William Hickey" in the anti-co-op *Express*, now M.P. and columnist for *Reynolds News*, has venomously attacked McGovern of the I.L.P. for criticizing Stalin and the U.S.S.R. We haven't much in common with John McGovern, but we do know how the I.L.P.'s comrades of the P.O.U.M. were slandered and assassinated by Stalin's G.P.U. in Spain. And moreover we have not forgotten how Stalin joined hands with Hitler for the partition of Poland after the Soviet-Nazi pact of August 1939. We regard with contempt the presumption of a toady like Driberg when he attacks the socialists of the I.L.P. for opposing the assassins of their comrades the revolutionary socialists of Spain.

LABOUR VICTIMS

CAPITALIST papers and politicians are always ready to condemn workers for the number of hours lost in industry through strikes and disputes. They show more reticence in giving figures of the time lost through accidents and illnesses which would be preventable in the majority of cases if capitalists were prepared to devote a fraction of their large profits to the improvement of workers' conditions.

The Department of Labour in the U.S.A. has recently published some interesting figures in that connection, which have been reproduced in the Bulletin of the International Federation of Trade Unions. According to these figures, in the past year 18,400 workers were fatally injured, 108,000 were crippled, of whom 17,000 so severely as to render them permanently and totally unfit for work, over two and a quarter million were unfit for work on an average longer than 15 days. The Department of Labour is of the opinion that 9/10 of these accidents are preventable.

The report also shows that to work in industry is as dangerous an occupation as to fight on a battlefield. Since Pearl Harbour, 37,600 war-workers have been killed, about 20% more than the direct war casualties. Some 210,000 workers became permanent invalids and 4½ million temporarily incapacitated. That is 60 times the wounded and missing in the forces.

WAR PROFITEERS

WHILE capitalists go into hysterical fits when workers dare to strike for better wages and conditions they build their pile at a speed even greater than during the last war. Profits from the first world-war created 23,000 millionaires in America. In spite of Roosevelt's declaration at the beginning of this war that this would not occur again, war profits are assuming truly colossal proportions. According to enquiries made by the American Federation of Labour (and quoted by the IFTU) profits amounted

last year alone, and before deduction of all taxes, to some 22 milliards dollars, and after deduction of all taxes still to 8.6 milliards dollars. This as a gross sum is more than double that of the best profit year of 1917. It is also estimated that American Big Business has accumulated in dormant reserves some 60-70 milliards dollars. While profits soar the Government has imposed a "freezing" of wages which with an increase in the cost of living means that the war has reduced the standard of living of the great majority of workers.

Another scandalous aspect of America at war is the increase of child labour. The number of fully employed children (14-15 years of age) in industry rose from 13,000 in 1940 to 750,000 in 1942. Up to the middle of the past year, this figure has increased tenfold. The number of employed juveniles (16-17) has quadrupled. Last summer altogether 5 million young persons took up land-work or other essential war-work. About two-and-three-quarter million were still employed by November.

While workers lose their lives and their health in American war-industries their children are prevented from enjoying the fruits of education and will probably swell the ranks of the unemployed after the war.

BANKERS' SOLIDARITY

IN the *Daily Express* of May 23rd is to be found this amazing example of how the world's big bankers maintain their international contact.

"Basle, Monday. A strange meeting of ghosts took place to-day at Basle's Bank for International Settlements, of which Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan, occupied Belgium and Holland, and neutral Sweden and Switzerland are members. Only the Swiss chairman, Ernest Weber, made an appearance . . . he opened registered letters from London, Berlin, Tokyo, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam and Stockholm. They contained the votes of these countries deciding the bank's future policy and fixing the annual dividend at 5 per cent. Before 1939 such financial leaders as Montague Norman, of the Bank of England, and Hjalmar Schacht of Berlin's Reichsbank, would travel to Basle to attend the meeting in the flesh.

Another kind of gathering, at which an American, a German, a Frenchman, an Italian and a Dutchman actually face each other is held every morning at 10.30 in the Director's room, and has been held regularly ever since 1939. At this conference the American president of the bank, Thomas McKittrick, the Frenchman, Roger Auboin, the German, Paul Hechler, the Italian, Raffael Pilotti, and the Dutchman, Marcel Van Zeeland, discuss current financial affairs."

Thus while the working-class of the world are blowing themselves to pieces in the process of defending their masters' interests, these money kings sit in conference discussing the best ways to maintain the good old capitalist system. Hooray for the profit-makers! Long live the capitalists! Death to the workers!

"JUSTICE"

AT Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts, a man was sentenced to two months hard labour for inflicting grievous bodily harm on an American soldier by striking him with a bottle.

From the *News of the World* (14/5/44) we learn:

"Mrs. Ada Millicent Hobbs told the magistrates that Webber suddenly asked for her umbrella, saying 'I want to crack somebody'. She realised he had changed from friendliness to a man 'maddened by drink'. The American gripped her so tightly round the neck that she felt her face swelling just as her husband came to her rescue." He hit the attacker on the head with a bottle of lemonade he was carrying home for his children. Incidentally his wife was expecting a baby, and since the incident had a miscarriage.

The Court nevertheless sentenced Mr. Hobbs to two months' hard labour. We need have no doubt that the same magistrates are in the habit of asking conscientious objectors what they would do if their wives were attacked by German soldiers. Perhaps some one will ask them precisely what they would approve of.

TOWARDS THE POLICE STATE

disquietude.

One of the newest defence regulations to come into the limelight is that forbidding visits to banned areas without permission. This is ostensibly a defence rule, but in its wielding it goes beyond all the limits of security, not to say commonsense.

Most of the offenders are young girls entering banned areas to meet their friends in the forces. The crabbed magistrates are quite unconcerned at increasing the prison population—"shove 'em all in!" is their motto. At Bournemouth on May 11th one girl of 17 was given 14 days imprisonment, another girl of 19 was given 28 days imprisonment. They went for one day to meet two American soldiers. At Fareham the same day two girls of 20 were given a month's hard labour!

And yet in the same news column (*Daily Herald*, 12/5/44) we read that at Alresford three similar offenders were only fined £1, £2 and £1 respectively! This is bureaucracy gone mad with a vengeance.

There is a grim irony about some of the stupid incidents reported. In the *Star*, (12/5/44), we read:

"A great check-up on identity cards was made in Brighton to-day . . . Even a funeral was halted on the front, and the credentials of every mourner were checked."

We trust the corpse came from no farther away than Hove . . .

On the next day we read of the most shameful case of all. Underneath a story of how two girls (who broke the ban by climbing through a railway station window just to go to a dance) were merely fined £4 each at Winchester, the *Herald* (13/5/44), reported the case of a girl of 23, sentenced to two months' hard labour, at Plymouth.

She broke down, "sobbing, 'My children, my children, what will happen, to my children?' Police evidence was given that she had been living with a coloured American soldier who supported her and her children, allowing her £3 a week." We can visualise that scene, and those policemen and that magistrate. Was it necessary for the police to give such irrelevant evidence—and is it a coincidence that this is the heaviest sentence we have yet read meted out? We are ashamed to see how easily the fascist canker is eating into Britain.

TITO

FOR long the adept press publicists of Stalin's henchman in Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito, have told us that he is a metal-worker who fought in the Spanish Civil War and learned his knowledge of "military tactics" there. Unfortunately no-one who had been in the Spanish War knew Tito, not even when it was explained that his real name was Josip Broz. It now appears that this is only a "legend" after all.

Says the *Daily Herald* (5/5/44) "Contrary to the legend, he has never been in Spain, but he did help to organise the flow of international volunteers for the Spanish Loyalist army." No doubt this too will be explained, all in due course.

Incidentally, the *Herald* refers to Tito as one of the "three modern Slavs who have thrown holy terror into German Hearts," the other two being Stalin, formerly Germany's ally, and Dimitrov, who was charged with the Reichstag fire and exculpated himself by throwing the blame on van der Lubbe, the tortured and slandered hero of the trials. It is these three politicians we are asked to believe are the only brave Slavs when countless thousands of Bulgarians, Yugoslavs and Russians withstand the Nazi and Bolshevik dictatorships.

CHINA'S ALLIES

SUDDEN CONCERN at the military situation in China has been expressed by the capitalist press recently. It has even been suggested that China is on the verge of collapse. "Things must be serious indeed", said the *Daily Mail* Editorial (16/5/44) "to send the Vice-President of the United States hurrying to China". According to the newspaper reports, the Japanese have succeeded in taking a strategically important section of the Peking-Hankow railway for the first time since 1937. This has enabled them to penetrate deep into Honan Province and thereby threaten to cut off 1,000,000 Chinese soldiers. "These events," declared the *Daily Mail*, "demonstrate not the progressive strength that should have accrued to China through her alliance with the Western Powers, but a progressive weakness." The assistance (or 'liberation', as it is officially termed) accorded to the Italian people seems to have had a similar debilitating effect. They too have undergone famine and inflation.

"High Chinese circles in London" state that China's difficulties are almost entirely due to the loss of the Burma Road in 1942, when the Japanese overran North Burma. It is obvious that the cutting of this major supply route would have very serious consequences. But apparently these consequences weren't considered by the Democratic Powers when Mr. Churchill's Government (Labour Party included) closed the Burma Road in July 1940. That particular crippling blow—dealt by one "ally" to another—is diplomatically forgotten.

The military position in China is complicated by several factors. On the one hand the whole of the Chinese army is not available for fighting the Japanese. "Chiang Kai-shek has an army of half a million men tied up in Southern Shensi Province, where it has been blockading the Communist armies of North-West China for three years." (*Daily Mail*, 15/4/44). The C.P. in this country may call the workers to National Unity with the employing class, but their Chinese counterparts are not so vocal about National Unity. Besides omitting to recall Churchill's closure of the Burma Road in 1940, the tactful capitalist press says nothing at all about the role of China's ally, the Soviet Union. While her next door neighbour faces possible collapse, Russia still is not at war with Japan. Indeed the Soviet Union propagandists have boasted that the Eastern section of the Red Army is still untouched and ready to guard the Eastern frontiers. One might have thought that "alliance" would demand that this great untouched army might be used to help the Chinese. But no: the Red Army watches the frontiers, and half a million of Chiang Kai-shek's army watch the Communist armies of North Western China. Friendly Allies!

Another factor is the shortage of supplies. "Heavy equipment, such as tanks and artillery, is almost wholly lacking, and there are few warplanes." Here again there seems to be a peculiar conception of the relations between Allies. The United States have already turned over some war plants back to civilian-goods production, and several factories have been closed in this country. "Enough" war material is being produced by the Western Democracies (who supplied Japan so liberally with war materials for years—right up till Pearl Harbour): but our Chinese Ally is unaccountably starved of arms! It seems rather thoughtless of Churchill and Roosevelt, who met Chiang Kai-shek so comparatively recently in Cairo, and who discussed the Japanese war so thoroughly at Quebec, now to have allowed Chinese resources to become so depleted. "That the President regards the whole matter very seriously is shown by the fact that he is sending Vice-President Wallace to Chungking to make a detailed report on the position and put the American view before Chiang Kai-shek." (*Daily Mail*, 15/4/44). A bit late, surely?

The papers declare moreover that China's collapse would "add many months, and possibly years to the war." Such gross carelessness in allowing affairs to reach the present pass is perhaps explained by this "fear". *War Commentary* has often pointed out that capitalist economy is now completely dependent on war to keep up profits, and the fear of peace is regularly reflected in the fall of Stock Exchange prices which follow every major victory. If China's collapse would prolong the war, the apparent indifference of her Allies is perhaps partly explained.

According to the *Daily Mail* (17/5/44) there is "growing criticism of Britain and America on whom the Chinese put the blame for military failure because promised aid has not been forthcoming"; but the same paper's editorial of the preceding day sportingly blames the Chinese themselves, and makes a savage attack on "China's traditional failings, incompetence and corruption." These, it goes on, "have by no means been eradicated, and the democratic façade conceals a form of government which is increasingly totalitarian. This picture, grim enough, in all conscience, is incomplete because of the iron censorship which prevails."

The United States are immensely rich and possess more than eighty per cent. of the world's gold. Yet they make no move to relieve the inflation in China which the *News Chronicle's* City Editor compares to the inflations which occurred in Russia, Germany and Austria after the last war. "The official index of the Cost of Living in Chungking, based on the first half of 1939=100., had by July of 1943 risen to 6,074. That is to say, prices were then more than 60 times

what they were before the outbreak of the war. Although no official figures have been published since then, the rise in prices over the past nine months has been even steeper, and I have heard of unofficial indices vaulting over the 10,000 within the last few months." (16/5/44).

As in Russia and Germany after the last war (and, one might add, in India during this war), the inflation has inevitably aggravated, if not produced, widespread famine. We have already drawn attention in *War Commentary* to the Chinese famines, and the plight of the Chinese people is now attested by articles in the medical press which are so ghastly as to be almost unreadable. In spite of this testimony of doctors working on relief work on the spot for the Society of Friends, "High Chinese circles in London" . . . deny that the Chinese people are starving, but agree that the official and salaried classes are suffering severely because of the inflation." (*Daily Mail*, 17/5/44). Again

one wonders why UNRRA does nothing to help, especially as the papers have already reported that the official food storage depots in the United States are filled up and that a glut of food "threatens".

The Chinese people are indeed fortunate. They possess a "form of government which is increasingly totalitarian", whose London representatives explain away the famine in their sympathy for the middle classes. They have "Allies" in England and America who send them neither food, nor arms, nor even try to help them out of their financial difficulties. And they have another "Ally", the U.S.S.R., the "People's State" which does not declare war on Japan, and so far from offering the assistance of its intact Eastern Red Army, provides a rivalry in its Communist stooges of Shensi who tie up half a million Chinese soldiers from fighting the Japanese invaders. What a picture of the United Nations!

ANARCHIST

A Negro's Worth

THE *SUNDAY PICTORIAL* (14/5/44) carries the story of Private Mathias Maye, a young coloured soldier from Nigeria. Says the *Pictorial*:

"You see, when he goes back to Nigeria he will have to live on only 5s. a week—which is what he will get for losing his two hands and an eye fighting as a volunteer for the Empire in North Africa.

Private Maye told the *Sunday Pictorial*:

"Two men from the Colonial Office came to the hospital and said they were going to give me a job to teach me to use a tailor's machine.

"When I had learned to use the machine, they said they would give it to me with a pension of one pound a month and send me back to Nigeria.

"It costs at least £3 a week to live in Nigeria—a loaf of bread costs 9d.," he said.

"And no one would want me with no hands. I couldn't hope to earn a living."

When he is repatriated to his home, Private Maye may receive a supplementary grant of 50 per cent. if the cost of living justifies it. Even so, he will get no more than 30s. a month."

The maximum pension that he can hope to receive is 7/6d. per week, in a country where it is necessary to have at least £3 per week to live. Although it gives prominence to this piece of filthy official meanness, the *Sunday Pictorial* gives no sort of picture of what life in Nigeria is like for the natives, nor indeed would any paper which depends upon cocoa advertisements show up the conditions in this cocoa-producing colony.

The Nigerian climate is unsuitable for European settlers and so the land is held mainly by independent natives who produce for export, cocoa, cotton, groundnuts, palm oil and kernels. But this independence is no guarantee for the natives' prosperity since European combines such as Unilevers, control the railways, docks, warehouses and general trading facilities. This produces a fine rake-off for the combines, as can be shown by comparing prices paid to the natives with prices paid in England. In 1930 the price paid in Nigeria was £29 10s. od. per ton, while in England it

was £32 12s. od., £6 2s. od. per ton had been milked by the trading and transporting interests. During the trade depression of the 1930's prices declined to £15 10s. od. for Nigeria in 1936 and from £27 to £30 for England. It will be seen that far from a decline the combines experienced a rise to from £11 10s. od. to £14 10s. od. for transport, etc.

This decline in prices coincided with a Government decision to increase taxes, widespread suffering and discontent was the result, and in one demonstration of 30,000 women, troops were called out who fired on the crowd, injuring hundreds and killing forty.

The process of economic oppression was continued in 1937 by the formation of a buying agreement by the European cocoa firms, who decided not to compete for the purchase of cocoa. Since the natives had no other market to sell in, this was a serious blow for them, as it meant the cocoa firms forced the price down, and in 1938 the Europeans decided to reduce the price they would pay for a load of 60 lbs. from 27s. to 10s. The natives' answer was to hold up supplies, but the Government which derives excise tax on the quantity sold (not the price received) intervened on the side of the European firms, and introduced an Incitement to Disaffection Act, which even forbade the natives to take organised action in their own defence.

The repressive legislation did not break the resistance of the natives, who continued to hold mass meetings and instituted a boycott of British goods. Sympathetic strikes broke out in the gold mines, and so widespread was the movement that the British firms were forced to suspend the new prices. And yet the Christian firms of Rowntrees, Cadburys and Frys boast that the price of cocoa has not risen during the war!

Nigerian justice might be typified by the case of two natives, Philip Esaika and Ben Udensi, who on January 20th, 1938, were convicted for stealing yarns valued at 2s. They received a sentence of *ten years imprisonment*, and the sentence was confirmed on appeal on 9th May 1938.

That is the glorious heritage Private Maye was fighting for.

BATTLE of the BUREAUCRACIES

THE CRITICISMS OF the National Health Plan put forward by the British Medical Association have been very helpful to the Government. They represent the B.M.A. (rightly) as a conservative reactionary body, and then imply that their own plan is a radical one. The dispute is thus represented as a struggle of the right and the left, of the opponents of progress *versus* its upholders. Few Governments have put into force so many reactionary measures in so short a time as the Churchill Tory-Coalition; it is rather ironical to see them posing as the protagonists of a progressive Health policy against the attacks of reaction!

Actually the National Health Plan corresponds to a difficult post war situation. Most of the younger doctors have been called up for service in the R.A.M.C., the majority before they have acquired practices or other than short term civilian posts. Consequently, the end of the War will find them with no job to go back to, and therefore on the look out for a reasonably paid post. Such men will jump at a salaried position under a Government Health Scheme, especially if the scheme has been boosted as progressive. It is probable that the desire to solve this post-war problem carries more weight with the Government than zeal for the welfare of the working class in general. Peace-time budgets conspicuously neglected the needs of workers' nutrition and other outstanding problems.

BUREAUCRATS OF THE B.M.A.

The B.M.A. also show up in an ironical light through this paper battle. They are a body—in effect, a trade union—which by no means embraces the whole medical profession, yet they took upon themselves even before the war (e.g. during the Munich Crisis of 1938) gratuitously to begin to organize the medical profession as a whole. The Central Medical War Committee, whose secretary, Dr. Charles Hill, is also secretary of the B.M.A., wields dictatorial powers, and has regimented all doctors to suit the needs of the Government. Doctors can be called up from their practices or their jobs without any consultation as to their wishes. Without the permission of the Central Medical War Committee a doctor cannot change his job or undertake another branch of medical work. The Committee has put into effect a machinery essentially similar to the Essential Works Order.

This immense centralization has, of course, had the inevitable sterile results. While the remaining civilian doctors are grossly overworked, and the hospitals understaffed, the R.A.M.C. is filled with doctors, many of them specialists, who are crying out for work. I know of surgeons who take locum work on their periods of leave in order to keep their hands in; general practitioners who have been compelled to leave their practices on the shoulders of one partner, finding themselves in the R.A.M.C. with, literally, not a single patient for months.

The bureaucratic methods of the Central Medical War Committee have had similar grotesque results in hospital practice. At the same time as the hospitals were being compelled to manage with only half their previous surgical staffs, they were also asked to increase the number of beds set aside for air raid casualties. The diminished staffs find it hard enough to get along in their civilian work; but in the event of a heavy blitz they are overwhelmed with work. At one hospital during the recent raids, the much diminished surgical staff had to deal with over eighty admissions during a single night. As a result the surgeons worked without intermission for almost thirty hours. Meanwhile their former colleagues, languishing in the R.A.M.C. were complaining bitterly of their enforced inactivity and lack of practice.

With these fruits of bureaucratic management in mind, Dr. Charles Hill's warning that he saw in the Government's

proposals "the cold hand of bureaucracy" is simply the pot calling the kettle black. The medical profession suffers already only too severely from the cold hand of its own bureaucrats. And of course the general public suffers too in even longer waits in hospitals, and even scantier attention than they received in the past.

TRAILING A RED HERRING

The whole discussion serves another purpose of reaction by evading the real issue and concealing the main problem. Over and over again during the past twenty years it has been pointed out that the great underlying cause of the mass of ill health is poverty. No doubt the medical services can do with improvement (though they will not be improved by further centralization). But improved medical services will do nothing to remove poverty and very little towards mitigating its effects. The Socialists and Communists can be expected to take sides in such paper battles as the present one of the B.M.A. and the Government. Political issues which obscure fundamental economic problems are an essential part of their stock-in-trade. But Anarchists and working class militants refuse to be put off the main question, the fundamental economic issue, the abolition of poverty itself.

J. H.

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TIME MARCHES ON

"I WANT FRIENDSHIP WITH JAPAN"—Lord Rothermere.

"I want to say a few words of common sense before our excitable Pacifists push this country into an embroilment with Japan. . . . Why should we or any other Western nation or the League of Nations go to war with Japan to keep her out of China? . . . Japan is a natural friend of Britain. So long as she maintains the open door it is no concern of ours what steps she takes to pacify and reorganise China. . . . The basis of our foreign policy in the Far East can be stated in three words—friendship with Japan."

Daily Mail, 23/5/34.

In May 1944, the Rothermere Press is full of stories of Japanese atrocities.

A BLIMP'S OBITUARY

Sir Samuel heard in London the news that his deputy in Madrid, Mr. Arthur Yencken, had been killed in an airplane crash.

Mr. Yencken was at the Foreign Office for some years. I was talking about him to-day with Lord Vansittart. Yencken and Vansittart used to play tennis together. Yencken got a Blue for the game at Oxford, and although he was badly wounded in the last war he still played well. He was 50.

Evening Standard, 19/5/44.

LIKE COWSHEDS

"A number of these prefabricated houses together would look like cowsheds. I am glad I am not a soldier coming back to them"—Councillor G. H. Froude, of Walton-on-Thames, Yesterday.

Sunday Express, 14/5/44.

AMERICAN MRS. GRUNDY

The United States is now experiencing one of those periodic and spasmodic attempts at the censorship of artistic creation which cause intelligent Americans to hang their heads. An excellent new novel *Strange Fruit*, by Lilian Smith, has been declared obscene by the police in Boston, which, despite its long early history as a centre of American culture, has in recent years been the scene of many attempts at the censorship of legitimate works of art on what most people feel to be totally inadequate grounds.

The Smith novel, while not in the first flight, is a work of distinguished ability dealing with the relations of whites and Negroes in a small Southern town. It is certainly by all odds the ablest work in this field ever written. The censors profess to be exercised because one common Anglo-Saxon word not usually printed appears twice in this book. It seems more likely, however, that they are disturbed by the book's frankness and honesty in dealing with the difficult question of race relations. And this in Boston, once so famous for its Abolitionism!

Manchester Guardian, 24/5/44.

ABOUT TIME WE GREW UP

Every nation requires some set of symbols to which the loyalty and communal spirit of the people can be attached. In Great Britain the Royal Family has, for four generations, admirably fulfilled this most necessary function. In America the President is only a politician, chosen in a hotly contested election. Though he is treated with great respect, he cannot be a focus of loyalty, in the same way as an unpolitical Royal Family. Hence these emotions are transferred to the flag. Hence the elaborate ceremonies of saluting the flag, which seem rather childish to many Englishmen. They are just as childish, and no more so, than the ceremonies connected with Royalty. That is to say, they are a necessary response to the child-like element that lingers in the adult citizen.

Transatlantic, May 1944.

NOT LIKELY!

The right of the man in the street to go in for private flying after the war, was urged by the Duke of Sutherland in the resumed debate on post war civil aviation in the House of Lords to-day.

"The prospect of thousands of aircraft flying over our countryside may not appear pleasing to some people, but I am afraid it is inevitable," he said.

Evening Standard, 11/5/44.

Where will workers keep their plane? In the bath?

Through

FUTILITY OF THE LAW:

AMERICAN ILLUSTRATION

Is the "colour bar" an official policy?

Certainly not. In fact, quite the contrary. In 1870 the Constitution was amended to make it clear that "the right of the citizens to vote shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude" . . . If in spite of these laws, the coloured American lives under serious disabilities, the fact is an illustration of the limited power of the law to make people do what they do not want to do. Particularly in the Southern States, great ingenuity has been shown in getting round the law. Thus the "Jim Crow" laws, which compel Negroes to ride in a separate section of trains and buses, are legal, because they equally forbid the whites to travel in the coloured sections. Even in the north, the law cannot compel employers to give the Negro equal chances of employment.

Transatlantic, May, 1944.

This illustration of the law's futility is even more striking when one considers the U.S. Government itself operates the colour bar in the armed forces.

HEIL HODGSON!

"There must be order and organisation just as much in the Trade Union Movement as in business. Without this there can be no real progress."

Mr. Mark Hodgson, president of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said this to-day when he dealt with Regulation 1AA at the annual conference of the Confederation.

"It is essential for masses of men who have power that they should not throw that power away by want of discipline."

"Without order, discipline, subordination and trust in leaders, a trade union becomes a mob."

Daily Herald, 16/5/44.

"Order, discipline, subordination and trust in leaders" has a familiar ring. We prefer "mobs".

GUILTY UNDER 1AA?

When captured Allied officers who refused to drill and give orders in Japanese style were thrown into prison in New Guinea, other officers staged a sit-down strike.

They also refused to learn Japanese, to work or eat. The Japanese gave in and the officers were released.

Evening News, 11/5/44.

WHILE CHINA STARVES

The phenomenal wartime glut in food has now reached a point where America is embarrassed by the possession of 8,000,000 cases of eggs, 130,000,000 lb of frozen vegetables, 1,600,000,000 lb. of meat and poultry and 180,000,000 lb. of butter and cheese.

These figures, obtained in a survey by the authoritative *Wall Street Journal*, coincide with reports from most areas in America that storage facilities are overtaxed.

Daily Sketch, 27/4/44.

the Press

MRS. PORTER COMPLAINS

Women railway workers at a large London depot say that to wash they must either go to the public wash-houses, ten minutes away, or carry water up a spiral staircase to the mess-room, where it has to be boiled.

This statement was made to me when I visited the depot, where over 500 women or girls are employed. The Essential Work Order says that "satisfactory provision" for welfare must be made. I doubt whether Mr. Bevin would consider as "satisfactory" the arrangements described to me.

For most of the 500 women there are only five lavatories, which, I was told, had originally been condemned as unfit for men. Recently five more were added, but they are said to be inconveniently placed. There are washbasins, but no hot water, and soap and towels are not provided.

I was assured that the mess-room is the only rest-room provided. It is sparsely furnished with a trestle table and wooden benches. In it I saw five girls trying to wash at the same bucket. The women complained that there was nowhere to change out of dirty clothes, and no lockers for handbags or odds and ends. Such conditions have contributed to an increase of pilfering.

Another grievance is there is no trained nurse on the premises and that the first aid room is staffed entirely by men volunteers, who have taken a St. John Ambulance certificate. As a result, a number of accidents go unreported.

Machinery for dealing with complaints was described as slow, and the claim is made that the women should be represented on the workers' side of the committee which handles grievances.

Observer, 14/5/44.

SUBTLE DIFFERENCE

"In letters I have recently received (from India) have been some horrified comments on the exploitation of women's labour in coal mines.

Now there is nothing against women's work in coal mines except its exploitation by capitalists. It is now nearly fifteen years since I saw women at work underground in Soviet pits, observed their conditions, feeding and so forth, was convinced and argued with British trade union delegates to Russia in the effort to convince them that, given these proper conditions of pay, amenities and food, there is no harm in a woman working underground."

Walter Holmes in the *Daily Worker*, 19/5/44.

The Durham miners who also saw Russian women at work in the mines took a different view from Mr. Holmes. They condemned the work of women underground in "plain, honest pit terms". They knew something of the hardships of working in the mines, Mr. Holmes presumably doesn't.

RUSSIAN POST-WAR PLANS

Russia has proposed that if it fights to the bitter end, the whole German Army should be declared prisoners and reorganised into labour groups for reconstruction work in the devastated lands after the war.

The claim, put forward by the Soviet member of the European Advisory Council, M. Gusev, the Ambassador in London, is not being considered by the British and American Governments, who point out that they are bound by the Hague Convention, under which any such treatment of the German Army would be illegal. Russia is not a signatory to the Convention.

Observer, 7/5/44.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ?

This week in England scores of trade union leaders are going to prison. They are going quite cheerfully of their own volition.

The explanation of this "gaol-crashing" is that the Home Office has allowed the Prison Officers' Association—representing nearly all the prison warders—to hold its annual conference in Walton Prison, Liverpool.

Main subjects before the Conference will be a demand from the Bedford branch for the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act to enable the prison officers to affiliate to the T.U.C., and a special claim for an extra £1 a week by the officers from Dartmoor.

News Chronicle, 15/5/44.

The T.U.'s are becoming a vast prison with Mr. Bevin as chief warden; there is no reason why prison warders should not be welcomed in a brotherly spirit.

FORTUNE'S CHILDREN

Stowe eventually passed to the Grenvilles, the magnates whose relations at one time furnished half the Cabinet and a third of the House of Commons and one of whom lost us the American Colonies.

These Grenvilles became successively marquises and later Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos. The second duke is said to have inherited £6,000,000—a huge sum at the beginning of the 19th century. He succeeded in spending £7,000,000 by a really phenomenal extravagance which included an attempt to buy up the land on either side of the road from Stowe to Chandos-square in London, so that he could refer to the whole of the 60 miles of roadway as his "carriage drive".

Evening News, 5/5/44.

As Heine says, "the aristocracy is composed of asses—asses talking about horses."

BOOKS BURNED IN U.S.A.

In a truly symbolic climax to the Minneapolis Labour Case, the federal judge who passed sentence upon the 18 imprisoned Trotskyist and Minneapolis Local 544-CIO leaders on March 13 ordered the destruction of the Marxist literature and pictures of the great Marxist teachers which the FBI had seized in June, 1941 from the Twin Cities headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party and which constituted the Roosevelt prosecution's major "evidence" in the Minneapolis Smith "Gag" Act frameup.

Among the SWP property which trial Judge M. M. Joyce, of the U.S. District Court in Minneapolis, ordered the U.S. Marshall's office to destroy, are copies of Marx and Engel's *Communist Manifesto* and other historic writings of the founders of scientific socialism, many works of Lenin and Trotsky, and numerous publications of the Trotskyist movement. Also ordered burned are red flags and pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky which had been displayed in the SWP headquarters in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Most of the socialist classics to be burned were also on the list of the Nazis and were heaped on the flames of Hitler's bonfires.

The Militant, N.Y., 25/3/44.

TAXI DRIVERS' BOYCOTT

Win their Demands

SINCE MONDAY, MAY 8th, after giving due warning, the Manchester taxi drivers have been conducting an almost 100% boycott of the railway stations. The dispute is of long standing, arising out of the fact that the Railway Companies permit only a limited number of taxi-drivers to ply for hire on the station approaches, and in these cases only in return for an annual rent of £7 16s. od. for each taxi-cab. The taxi-drivers add weight to their arguments when they point out that after a similar tussle some years ago the Railway Companies conceded the demands of the London taxi drivers.

On January 7th, The Manchester & Salford Owner Drivers' Association received and rejected an offer from the Railway Companies, that they would allow free access to station approaches to all taxicabs provided the Association paid the railway £750 per year.

The drivers maintain that the present system results in much 'dead' mileage. Ordinary street taxis running to stations with passengers are not allowed to take on new passengers at the station for the return journey. Similarly, a taxi licenced at Victoria Station cannot pick up passengers at Central Station on the return journey. This can only be done by privileged taxis licenced at the Victoria Station.

A fine example of solidarity was shown when out of the 284 taxi drivers in Manchester only 20 tried to break the boycott at the start. Of these 4 were former members of the Association, 2 were refused admission, and the remaining 13 were described as 'rebel' members. Of the 14 boycott breakers at London Road Station only 12 remained on the Tuesday. There were five at Central Station, but the single one at Victoria joined the rest the following day.

From the first day of the boycott an explanatory notice to the public was posted on all taxis.

"The Association apologises to the public for any inconvenience caused, and wishes to explain that this action

is being taken in the belief that the best interests of the public would be served if the railway companies could be persuaded to allow all licensed taxis free access to the station approaches."

The idea behind the boycott was to arouse public sympathy to such an extent that the railways would be forced to capitulate and concede the claims of the drivers. Letters of protest were received from regular customers who were inconvenienced, but the majority of the public seemed to express sympathy with the action. At the particularly long approach to London Road Station could be seen streams of passengers making three or four journeys with luggage. In some instances, to lessen hardship in such cases as cripples, invalids, etc., drivers temporarily relaxed the boycott.

Apparently W. Wovenden, secretary of the Manchester Association, has received word from J. Kendall, secretary of the Liverpool Association, to the effect that meetings had been arranged to consider adopting similar methods in Liverpool.

It is unfortunate that such steps to extend the boycott were not taken earlier, and it is highly probable that if a more revolutionary form of action had been taken, such as continuing to use the station approaches while ignoring the demands of the Railway Companies for rent, action would have been precipitated and, with publicity, an even greater public sympathy enlisted.

Nearly a fortnight later, only 14 boycott breakers remain.

The boycott has now ended in complete success for the taxi drivers, the Railway Companies having agreed to allow all taxis to use the station approach without payment of rent.

STATE SLAVERY

EVEN the most gullible will have some misgivings about the Government's plans for industry after the war. The aim is "above all" to renew and expand export trade—to start again on the old, old road to slumps, re-armaments and war, with all the necessities imposed by competition—cutting wages and living conditions on the plea of "reducing costs" etc. But in the meantime, the Government have not failed to learn from the war preparations of Nazi Germany and the U.S.S.R.; rationing and "a measure of price control" are to remain for some time after the war. Why? But to prevent inflation, of course! Not only prices but also wages must be kept stable; and the government declares that it will take care to see that factories are not crowded into areas such that a labour scarcity (=rise in wages) results. Bevin talks also (*News Chronicle*, 27/5/44) of increasing the mobility of labour". Translated into practical terms this means that you can be drafted into some job miles from your friends and family whether you like it or not. The Government reiterates its determination that there shall be no unemployment (although some capitalist spokesmen have come forward to say that "unemployment is the condition of freedom" the alternative being State control of Labour and compulsory direction into certain industries); so far the capitalist world has only found one method for absorbing surplus labour, whether in Russia, Germany or America; to wit, labour camps. This is what we envisage behind such expressions as "the Government intends to insist on a long term policy of public expenditure". For what alternative has capitalism to offer?

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Why Prisons Stink!

THE BRIEF OUTLINE of prison conditions already given in the *May War Commentary* needs enlarging upon in several respects. The poor quality of the food, the monotony of the work and the crudity of the clothing and accommodation have been emphasised, and the same faults must be levelled against sanitary and medical conditions. Prisons stink with an unmistakable and distinctive odour, and the reason primarily is not the laziness of the prisoners, but the totally inadequate cleaning facilities provided.

So far as personal facilities go, the prisoner is given a hot bath once a week. The water can be as hot or cold as the individual desires, but the soap provided is of such a cheese-like quality that it requires considerable labour to produce a sparse lather. The time allowed in the bath is insufficient, but particularly bad were the conditions in Maidstone prison. The following is from a report by C. B. Harding on conditions in Maidstone, September 1941 to April 1942:

"Bathing facilities at Maidstone were entirely inadequate. We were allowed twenty minutes from the time we left the workshop to returning to the workshop. In that twenty minutes we had to go through the whole paraphernalia of being counted four times, march to the bath-house, undress, bathe, obtain clean clothing (if there was any available), dress, clean the bath and return to the workshop. The maximum time that we received in the bath was ten minutes, and if the officer was behind schedule we only received five minutes."

Although my experience in Wormwood Scrubs was not as bad as this, the same tendency to rush bathing was present, and since this weekly bath is the only occasion on which hot water is provided it is impossible to keep clean. Clean underclothes, socks and shirt are provided in the bath-house: quite often the socks are too small or too large or need mending.

For the rest of the week the prisoner has to wash in his cell in a basin provided. The water is cold and the soap so poor that it is impossible to wash properly. The little soap that is issued has to serve for cleaning the cell as well as washing, with the result that often neither job can be done properly. Indeed the rest of the cleaning arrangements for the halls mainly consist of cold water and dirty swabs. I never saw any disinfectant of any sort used for cleaning, it was not even available for chamber pots or lavatories.

During working hours and while on exercise, lavatories (nearly always dirty ones) are provided for use, but during the time that the prisoner is in his cell he must use a chamber pot. Since many prisoners are locked up at 4.30 or 5.30 this means that they must inhabit a cell without access to an outside lavatory for 13 or 14 hours. The ventilation in the cell would be inadequate even without a full chamber for such a length of time. Most prisoners get "prison diarrhoea" sometime during their sentence; the uncomfortable results can be imagined. The sanitary arrangement in the halls is extremely crude. There are four "recesses" on each landing, and each recess serves for twenty-two men. In the recess are a water tap, large basin for emptying slops and a W.C., and hardly a week goes by without one of these recesses being out of order, so that men have to use another one. Although the recess windows are open all day there is still a most unpleasant smell; nothing in the way of disinfectant or chloride of lime is used to keep the smell down.

Medical Treatment.

The same attitude as is taken towards general cleanliness is noticed in the medical treatment. I had very little to do with the prison doctors; I contracted one cold and was given

a couple of pills for it. But nearly everyone whom I talked to was not satisfied that he was receiving expert care. The general idea, as in the army, is to regard people who go sick as malingerers, and several people who obviously needed treatment told me that the doctor had said they were swinging the lead. One man told me he suffered with noises in his ears, and he went to the doctor who said it was wax, and he should dig it out with a needle. Another man had a bad tooth, he was taken to the hospital where a medical orderly (an ordinary screw) tried to pull it out with a pair of cotton-wool tweezers. He caused so much pain that the prisoner implored him to stop (no anaesthetic was used, of course), and that night he pulled it out himself in his cell.

Far worse than the conditions in Wormwood Scrubs were those at Maidstone prison, as the following extracts from a report by C. B. Harding will show.

"Convicted to 12 months imprisonment on August 27th, 1941, I was conveyed to Wandsworth Prison that day. On being medically examined I informed the M.O. of my stomach trouble (gastric ulcers) this was entirely disregarded.

I tried, but found it impossible to eat the food served for mid-day meal. If I ate it I was sick; I therefore restricted myself to the bread and porridge provided for breakfast and tea. After a week on such a diet I felt very weak and applied to see the M.O. I informed him that I was unable to eat the dinner provided; I was informed that I should not waste food in such critical times. I was given bismuth and protested that bismuth was only a palliative and would not help one in the least. The door was slammed in my face.

I was beginning to give up hope of obtaining a suitable diet, and was continuing to live on 1 lb. of bread and 1 pint of porridge, added to which I ate treacle pudding which was issued three times a week. I found my knees aching if I stood or walked for more than 15 minutes; allotted exercise was an arduous task.

I was transferred to Maidstone Prison on September 22nd, 1941. We received a medical examination on reception . . . the examination lasted approximately 3 minutes. Whilst the M.O. was filling in my record I attempted to inform him of my complaints regarding unsuitability of the food provided—I was promptly told to 'Shut up and get out'.

Late in October (1941) I saw the M.O. and informed him that I was not able to eat the mid-day meals that were provided . . . I offered to have Punishment Diet No. 2 mid-day meal in lieu of the ordinary dinner. My request was refused and was answered with words to the effect that "it was all part of the punishment".

The Medical Commissioner visited the prison in January 1942, and I told him that I had suffered with 'stomach trouble' for approximately 5 years. I was told to strip and was examined. At the end of the examination I was asked what my weight was before conviction, whether I had lost weight and whether I had applied for vegetarian diet. I replied that vegetarian diet disagreed with my digestion . . . further, that my weight prior to imprisonment was 11st. 12lbs., and that as far as I knew my weight was then 10st. 8lbs. . . After a few minutes of thought and a perusal of my 'record file' I was informed that the Medical Commissioner agreed with the M.O.'s treatment. The irony of the whole matter was that Gastric or Duodenal Ulcers cannot be satisfactorily diagnosed unless X-ray photographs and treatment are available. Also the M.C. agreed with the M.O.'s treatment, when no such treatment had been given."

During the whole of his imprisonment this man lived on 1 lb. of bread and 1 pint of porridge per day plus about 1 pint of rice three times a week. A few weeks before his release he was made a food orderly and got double rations of porridge and rice, which enabled him to regain some of his lost weight. Even so at the end of his sentence he weighed 12 lbs. lighter than before imprisonment. He remarks that he met numerous men in Maidstone Prison who suffered from Gastric or Duodenal Ulcers, and only one of them was able to get a change of diet, and then only for a short while. This same prisoner, C. B. Harding, suffered from Neuritis, bad eyes, bleeding gums, bad tooth and a rash on the face, and for each of these complaints the treatment he received was exceedingly inadequate and obtained only after considerable periods of time.

Psychological Treatment.

In Wormwood Scrubs there is supposed to be provided psychological treatment for various types of criminals, mainly homosexuals. A psychiatrist is in attendance to analyse the dreams of these people and generally to discover their troubles. I spoke to several people who were receiving this treatment, mostly homosexuals and one kleptomaniac, and their general reaction was that this treatment was useless. Even if one agrees that psycho-analysis is the best way to cure homosexuals, and that the person conducting the treatment at Wormwood Scrubs is competent, even then any good which he might do in his half hour's consultation would all be undone as soon as the prisoner returned to the harsh and callous atmosphere of the workshop. The homosexual in prison is easily picked out and becomes an object for humour not only on the part of other unthinking prisoners but also on the part of most of the prison officers themselves. The law against homosexuals is one of the most stupid in existence. Its effect is to punish people for a physical abnormality which they cannot help, and to punish them with most ferociously long terms of imprisonment. If ever there were a persecuted minority in this country it is the homosexuals.

Effect on the Prisoner.

The combination of these conditions—poor food, inadequate exercise, bad ventilation and indifferent medical attention—makes itself felt in the prisoners' health. Most prisoners at some time suffer from internal disorders; biliousness, constipation or diarrhoea, and if a considerable sentence is served this is carried on after discharge. The ex-prisoner generally has to be careful what he eats when he gets home or further trouble will be the result of eating normally. The only apparent standard for health is the prisoner's weight, and this is generally maintained, but one notices that the face becomes fat and puffy and takes on a most unhealthy appearance. For a long while after discharge the ex-prisoner feels fatigued after strenuous exercise and easily catches minor ailments due to his generally run down condition. There can be no doubt as to the effects of imprisonment, especially a long term. Although the authorities claim that the prisoner is sent out as healthy as when he came in, their claim is belied by the often definite ill health that follows a holiday at His Majesty's expense.

JACK WADE

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BRITISH STAKHANOVITES

The *Daily Worker* seems to have just realised the danger of stepping up production for the workers. In their issue of the 10th of May they reported, with great indignation, the following case:

"Petrol tanks were recently urgently required for a fighter plane. So workers at a North London factory stepped up their output by 50 per cent in one week.

Although the parent firm, sent a telegram of congratulations, the management's only recognition of the workers' efforts was an attempt to retime the job.

This was the thanks men received who had worked nine, ten and eleven hours a day; some of whom had volunteered to work through the night; some of whom had gone in on Sunday."

The indignation of the *Daily Worker* is rather surprising. They obviously seem to expect decency from the bosses. They have said such nice things about capitalists in the last few years that they seem to have begun to believe in them themselves.

If the *Daily Worker* reporter knew anything about Russian methods he would not feel so surprised. Jobs are constantly retimed in Russian factories. After Stakhanovites break records by doing jobs in far less time than ordinary workers the job is retimed and new "normes" for piece work are brought in. As piece work is almost universally applied in Russia (minimum wages don't exist) this means a substantial decrease in the salary of the majority of workers. British stakhanovites would not have been shown more gratitude by the Russian Government.

ANARCHY OR CHAOS

By GEORGE WOODCOCK

This book is a restatement in contemporary terms of the social philosophy of anarchism, and an advocacy of that philosophy as a solution of modern social problems and as the only real alternative to the totalitarian systems which dominate almost every country in the world today. The opening chapters contain a brief analysis of the contemporary social scene, and show that the fundamental problem is the reconciliation of freedom with the organisation necessary for the ample provision of the material necessities of life. The remainder of the book is concerned with the exposition of anarchism as the only system of social theory which makes possible any true reconciliation of these objectives.

This is the first comprehensive introduction to anarchism to be published in this country.

124 pages.

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A useful Book

"YOUR M.P." by "Gracchus"
(Gollancz, 2s. 6d.)

THIS BOOK IS one of a series being published by Gollancz, which include *Guilty Men*, and *The Trial of Mussolini*, and is in the same classification as *Tory M.P.* It is another exposure of the Tory caucus, and as such deserves the widest publicity and reading. Far too few people realise the extent to which the Conservative Party gave birth to Fascism. The fact that events since the war have forced the Conservatives to swallow many of their words does not alter the fact that these are indeed the guilty men who were the Pétains, Darlans and Badoglios of Britain.

We admit the fact that everyone is entitled to change his mind. In every movement there is bound to exist a large proportion of people who were formerly of contrary opinion, but who drew certain lessons from time and experience and altered their opinions. That is one thing. What we indict is a far different thing—we indict the Conservative politicians who have not altered their opinions, but have been forced to restate the same position in a different way. Their actions are still in defence of the same propertied interests that led them to support Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. Instead of believing that they must kow-tow to the dictators, however, they now believe they must send the British rank-and-file to fight against an enemy rank-and-file. But their opinions have not altered—it is still to preserve the same monopoly interests—and as we pointed out four years ago, they would support any Hitler or Mussolini who did not attack the British Empire—witness their present support of Badoglio. It is all to the good that the previous statements of the Conservatives should be brought forth to witness against them, because they have never recanted.

Hitler was just as much a murderer and a vile dictator in 1933 as in 1944. That was known to Anarchists, and it was known to most people of the left. Mussolini was as vile in 1923 as in 1943. Mr. Churchill praised Mussolini (this book rather unfairly misses out Mr. Churchill's record on fascism—it supports Churchill in spite of its knowing what Tory M.P.s are made of. It cannot even learn from its own disclosures. Thus while it exposes among others the "family tradition" of careerist politicians in the Stanleys and Cavendishes, it omits that of the Churchills). Likewise Mr. Somerset de Chair felt the "profoundest admiration" for Mussolini. Mr. Duff Cooper felt that "between Italy and England

YOUR M.P.

there can never be any serious misunderstanding. Naturally fascist Italy and conservative England could not disagree unless both wanted the same bone."

The author of this book does not mention much about the Tory M.P.s who rooted for Franco and Fascism in the Civil War, and so in effect went to war with the British working class whose sympathies were quite the reverse. Among them are most of the Conservatives, particularly Mr. A. T. Lennox-Boyd, (now in the Cabinet), and Lt.-Col. Sir Thomas Moore who backed fascism in every country, including Mosley in this country. Wing-Commander James was a fervent supporter of Franco. In the Anglo-German Fellowship and the Link—both thinly concealed Nazi propaganda agencies—the Tory M.P.s names wax large. The Fellowship, including Sir Thomas Moore, Lord McGowan (chairman of I.C.I.) and "corporate members" like Guinness, Mahon and Co., Unilevers, the bankers Lazard Bros., the Dunlop Rubber Co., devoted itself "to promote fellowship between the two peoples." Amongst the peoples with whom it promoted fellowship were Herr von Ribbentrop (now Hitler's Foreign Minister), Field Marshal von Blomberg (later Minister for War) and Freiherr von Hadeln, then adjutant in the S.S. (Black Guard) to Herr Himmler, Gestapo chief. As Sir Thomas Moore truly said, "Surely there cannot be any fundamental difference of outlook between the Black-shirts and their parents, the Conservatives?"

The United Christian Front, under Captain Ramsay, aided General Franco. It included apart from Captain Ramsay, other Tory M.P.s such as Captain McEwen. Not only M.P.s belonged to the pre-war fifth column. In the Anglo-German Fellowship the peers of the realm included six lords who had been M.P.s, and such "great names" as the Duke of Wellington, the Marquess of Carisbrooke, the Marquess of Londonderry, the Marquess of Lothian, "with five earls, three viscounts, and any number of mere lords". Had the author set out to include the Lords as well as the Commons, his book would have been even more striking testimony to the fundamental fact that all the newspapers, societies and groups associated with Toryism as well as the Conservative Party itself acted as nothing else than

Review

Hitler's, Mussolini's and Franco's propaganda agency.

Apart from the book exposing Conservative complicity with Fascism, it also exposes some of the ramps in the local Tory organisations. Candidates are mostly rich men ("It is as difficult for a poor man if he be a Conservative to get into the House of Commons as it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle" admitted Duff Cooper, himself brother-in-law to one Duke and nephew of another) and must pay to get a seat. The Tory associations ("rotten to the core" admitted Quintin Hogg) ask for a subscription. They do not raise money themselves, as do the self-sacrificing small bodies of revolutionaries who are attacked with the cry "where do the funds come from?" They make no effort at all. They demand a price from the candidate. The Hon. Quintin Hogg wrote of one agricultural constituency, a safe seat, where candidates were informed they need not apply unless they could subscribe £3000 a year to the association. £500 a year is a pretty moderate figure, plus expenses. Lt.-Col. Doland is expected to provide £600 a year and his own election expenses (£600 to £800) to be M.P. for Balham and Tooting. "It is the rich, safe seats which demand the highest contributions" according to Sir. Derrick Gunston, M.P.

Why, then, do candidates stand for Tory seats? Because they represent commercial interests, which they are thus able to represent in Parliament. One of the leaders of the Opposition to the Catering Bill—which infringed catering interests only very slightly—was Mr. L. H. Gluckstein, who quoted Sir Isadore Salmon. Mr. Gluckstein's family had close connections with the firm of Salmon & Gluckstein. Mr. Bracewell Smith has been in control of the Café Royal and the Park Lane Hotel, a director of the Ritz and the chairman of the Carlton. He was pledged to unqualified support of the government, but he voted against the Bill; likewise Mr. Francis Beattie, who had just recently been elected to faith-

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fully obey the government, but who was a director of six baking, catering and biscuit firms in the Glasgow area.

Close connections with the aristocracy permeate the whole bunch. They are all likewise closely connected with industry, to represent the employers. Of the few who have been working-men (only two or three) these are now representative of employers—e.g. Mr. Denville, theatrical manager and showman.

This is a very valuable documentation and should be kept with the other volumes in the series, by all thinking workers, in order to be able to keep the Conservative Party in its true perspective. The Tories must never be allowed to delude the masses again. It is not a question of useless voting but of principle. Let us never again take heed of anyone who flaunts the Tory banner.

The author himself does not understand this lesson to be learned. As stated, he misses out the case against Churchill, whom he represents as a great leader misunderstood by the other Tories who voted for Chamberlain in 1940. He does not explain how Churchill backed fascism. We are afraid he would take heed of Churchill. Its other fault is that it takes the view that the Tories should never have spoken ill of Stalin. We plead with "Gracchus" not to be quite so childish. We all know perfectly well that when the present bubble has burst everyone will recognise that Russia is under a dictatorship just as much as Germany is. Even Mr. Gollancz found a lot out about Russia in 1939-40 when Stalin backed Hitler. What is important is that in place of Stalin the Tories offered not freedom but Hitler.

Without accepting the suggestion implicit in this book that the Labour and Liberal politicians are any better than the Tories, we nevertheless recommend it as one of the collections of conservative speeches that should drive them from public consideration.

A. M.

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Film Review

"THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE."

Academy Cinema, Oxford St.

"The Forgotten Village" is a film from America which has completely escaped the imprisoning conventions of Hollywood. It builds up no highly-paid stars to peddle dope to the discontented, it erects no paradise of false values and, within limits, the attitude from which it is made is valid and honest.

The 'story' in the film is simple—no blood-and-guts, no sugary sex, no kitsch tragedy. It is merely a representation of the life of the village people of a remote part of Mexico, showing the struggle by which a school teacher and a village boy managed, against the opposition of the conservative tendencies within the village, to gain the assistance of modern medical methods during an epidemic of typhoid against which the charms of the traditional wise woman had proved useless.

But, beneath this slight story, the film reveals a whole world of struggle. It shows the hard fight of the peasants to gain a mean livelihood from growing corn on the infertile soil of the Mexican uplands, and, superimposed on this, the weight of the landowning interests, which demand their portion of every harvest of corn brought in by the peasants. The meagre food, the mud hovels, the squalor of a life where the families sleep on the same earth floor as their animals, are all shown, with complete honesty. Again, it is shown how the peasants are bound to their life by superstition, by the chains of the mind laid by both the traditions of the Catholic church and the lingering relics of the old superstitions of the Aztecs, represented by the village wise woman. The significance of the alliance between power and superstition is demonstrated by the way in which the opposition to the introduction of medical methods to combat the

epidemic of typhoid is led by the landowner.

The film is made, we gather, completely without professional actors. The peasants are real peasants, enacting their own struggle against nature and oppression, the doctors are real doctors showing their own fight against the prejudices laid in the mind by the mental domination of religion and quack magic. As such, it is of great importance to anarchists in particular, because it demonstrates forcibly that ordinary men, where they have not been corrupted by the pretences of capitalist civilisation, by the false values of the cinema and the stage, have a natural faculty of dramatic representation which renders their acting more valuable than that of any of the boosted stars of the screen and stage. The peasants in this film show with a wonderful sincerity the endurance and patience of their own fight for life as well as the evil of the oppression which enmeshes them. There is a childbirth scene which is one of the finest things I have seen in the cinema.

There is an unfortunate little piece of praise at the end of the film for the Mexican Government's efforts to educate the Mexican masses. We are convinced that the kind of education the Mexican government will hand out will not help the peasants at all—it may free them from the domination of old-style superstition, but only to submit them to the domination of the new superstitions of the modern state. The things for which the film should be seen are not this insignificant and unconvincing little blurb at the end, but the excellent acting of these ordinary peasant men and women and children and the honest representation of their struggle against nature and oppression.

With "The Forgotten Village" is shown a pleasantly cynical French film, "Les Bas Fonds," in which the police are guyed and the most despicable characters are revealed as 'men who respect authority', while the most congenial figures are a burglar and an embezzler who steals the Government's money.

G. W.

YOUR LAST CHANCE!

June 10th is the date when remittances for all Solidarity Tickets should reach our office. We need hardly stress how important it is that the Solidarity drive should be successful. FREEDOM PRESS really needs every sixpence you can afford in order to carry on their work, and we therefore appeal to all our readers to do their utmost to return only the covers of the books of tickets (accompanied with postal orders). Those readers who have not had books of tickets can express their support of this initiative by sending a contribution.

Let us make this Solidarity drive a real expression of solidarity with the work being done by the FREEDOM PRESS.

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HOW TO BE A TRAMP AND A MINER IN A MONTH

Comrades,

I read with interest last *War Commentary's* Comment on the failure of the 'Bevin Boy' scheme. That it has failed is not surprising, when one knows the kind of conditions under which we are expected to live and work. On May 8th, I was one of a large group of Bevin boys and pit optants who reported to the National Service Officer at Coventry for training. Arriving at the office, we were kept waiting in a cold bare room for about two hours until a pompous little ex-major, who revealed himself in a very brusque manner as the welfare officer, arrived. He at once proceeded to make a lengthy and very unintelligent speech. First of all, he said, there must be no kind of nonsense. There was, he said, a war on (strangely enough, some of us had already heard that piece of news) and recent events such as those caused by 'those blasted strikers' were simply not to be tolerated. In his opinion, the strikers should be handed over to the forces who would know how to deal with them (à la Heinrich Himmler). This latter statement was somewhat unfortunate for the Major, since a considerable proportion of the trainees were ex-military men who afterwards expressed, in no uncertain language, their complete solidarity with the miners' fight for justice.

After describing the exploits of the B.E.F. in France, but particularly his own gallant adventures against the 'Huns', he proceeded to explain to us how we were to be housed, etc.

His well-fed face fairly radiant with joy, the major described to us the advantages and opportunities we would receive from working in the mines. We were to be housed in the 'Salvation' Army hostel at Coventry and taken to the colliery by special bus.

According to the Major, although the hostel was not all that might be expected, it was really very comfortable. The hostel, according to the major, was kept scrupulously clean. As a result of this soft soap the majority of the lads began to think that they were not in for such a bad time after all. We were soon to find out

the value of his words, however. Having concluded his well-rehearsed oration, the Major led us to the Hostel. The first glimpse of this large building was not very cheering. It resembled three things, a prison, a workhouse and a group of barns. We were received by a fat little sergeant who, having asked if we were hungry, which we were, told us that a 'nice hot dinner' was awaiting us.

The 'dining' hall into which we were ushered shocked us somewhat. I was immediately reminded of the old ditty about 'Christmas Day in the workhouse'. The 'nice hot dinner' turned out to be three-quarters cold. Also the meal was not made any more enjoyable since we soon discovered the presence of a host of cockroaches. The tea, or what the waitresses called tea, is what other people call dish water. The meat, which was as hard as a cannon ball, must have been cut off the oldest cow in England. Anyway, the meal was completely uneatable, the majority of the boys abandoning it.

After this enjoyable repast we were taken to our 'bedroom'. This was a large bare dormitory, which was much too overheated. The smell from the lavatories, on which there were no locks, was overpowering at 50 yards.

A great deal more might be said about this home for the 'happy Bevin boys', but I think the above will suffice. The food is scanty and not fit for pigs to eat, to put it briefly.

As for the course itself, I have been at the training centre a fortnight and know absolutely nothing about coal-mining yet, except some interesting accounts of past exploitation which have been told me by old miners. In fact, a large amount of the 'training' consists in digging holes and filling them up again and in cleaning up the colliery, laying bricks, stoking boilers, etc. In other words, cheap labour.

But a spirit of revolt exists among the Bevin boys, which is rapidly growing. Let us hope and work so that before long it will grow and join with the rising tide of the social revolution which will sweep away the state and its apologisers, the 'starvation' army who charge boys 27/6d. for a load of pig-wash.

V. B.

CONTRADICTIONS

Dear Sirs,

The following quoted headlines from two of the Forces papers out here might possibly be suitable for inclusion in your 'Through the Press' feature in the very interesting *War Commentary*.

Eighth Army News 28/4/44. BIGGER ALLOWANCES — HOME PRESS APPROVES.

Union Jack, 28/4/44. ARMY PAY—PRESS IS CRITICAL.

Best wishes for your paper,
C. S., C.M.F.

★

ENCOURAGING MESSAGE

DEAR COMRADES,

We have learned of your initiative of which we fully approve, and we are sending you 30 dollars for the Solidarity Tickets. Amidst the acrobatics of all the political parties, we admire and applaud the clear-sighted and honest attitude *War Commentary* has taken towards present events.

Carry on your good work, and we shall do our best over here.

Fraternal greetings,
CIRCOLO VOLONTÀ,
(Italian Anarchist Group, U.S.A.)

★

CORRIGENDUM

A correspondent draws attention to an error in the article on the London bus strike published in the May issue of *War Commentary*. Though soldiers who infringed discipline were formerly deprived of dependent's allowance as well as their pay, this no longer is the case. Deprivation of dependent's allowance is now only inflicted in the case of desertion or absence without leave. My argument that a soldier's wife and children are made to suffer if he, say, refused to act as a strike-breaker, therefore falls to the ground. The facts as stated in the article did however apply to the regular army in peace time, and have presumably been abandoned in the case of a conscript army on grounds of prudence. That the ruling class have no moral objection to such methods of coercion is apparent. I apologise for the error and am grateful to our correspondent for pointing it out.

J. H.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE AGAINST IAA

SINCE BEVIN'S Regulation 1AA (5 years penal servitude and/or £100 fine for urging strike action) has been put on the Statute Book, the Anti-Labour Laws Victims Defence Committee has been formed with the following object:—

"To provide legal aid to the four people arrested under the Trade Disputes Act, and to any other working-class prisoners who may be arrested under this Act, or under the new Defence Regulations; sustaining the victims and their dependants, and making clear the anti-working-class character of the legislation under which they have been charged."

The Provisional Committee consists of the following people:—

Chairman:

J. Maxton—I.L.P.

Secretary:

P. Sastry—Federation of Indian Associations.

Treasurer:

W. G. Cove—Labour Party.

R. Sorensen—Labour Party.

S. Silverman—Labour Party.

Rhys Davies—Labour Party

J. McGovern—I.L.P.

Fenner Brockway—I.L.P.

Walter Padley—I.L.P.

Ted Grant—Revolutionary Communist Party.

G. Pittock-Buss—London Area P.P.U.

Bob Turner.

Don McGregor—London Workers' Committee.

Matt Kavanagh—Anarchist Federation.

Arthur Ballard—Common Wealth.

D. Beech.

D. Ballantine.

Since this committee has been formed, it has been joined by Aneurin Bevan, Alec Sloan, S. O. Davies and R. R. Stokes. On May 9th, a packed meeting was held at the Conway Hall, and when Reg Groves had made his opening remarks as chairman, the following resolution was put to the meeting and unanimously adopted:

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"This public meeting, convened by the A.L.L.V.D.C. protests against the arrest of Jock Haston, Roy Tearse, Angel Keen and Heaton Lee under the anti-working-class Trade Disputes Act, and demands that the charges against them be withdrawn."

The Collection at the meeting amounted to £78 5s. od. This meeting was one of a series to be held all over the country as part of the campaign against the Trade Disputes Act and Regulation 1AA. All donations should be sent to V. Sastry,

SECRETARY, ALLVDC.

c/o 318, Regent's Park Road,
London, N.W.3. Phone: Fin. 4398.

LUCKY RUSSIANS!

REG BISHOP can be trusted to put his foot in it when he gets a chance. His pamphlet 'explaining' Soviet millionaires damned the whole business in trying to praise it. He now tries in the *Daily Worker* to convince his readers that the Russian people ate very well before the war. He has realized how well the Russian people live through a Soviet cookery book published in 1939 and which, according to him, "makes very succulent reading". Says Reg Bishop:

"The book consists of some 450 large pages which contain, in addition to well over 2,000 recipes, household hints, selected menus, and a number of colour-plates which make one's mouth water. Incidentally, those plates which illustrate the range of Soviet canned goods—from sweet corn to tomato juice, from pork stew to anchovies, show how far the food industry has developed since the end of the first Five-Year Plan.

And, judging by the interspersed drawings, few of the household gadgets so dear to the western housewife were any longer absent from the Soviet kitchen."

After reading this it will be difficult to understand why some people try to work out the standard of living of the Russian people by comparing their incomes and the price of food and other commodities. Economists and historians would save themselves a lot of work if they contented themselves with glancing at cookery books.

Reg Bishop says that the book had an edition of 100,000 which, according to him, shows that it was a "book for the many". That out of a population of 170 millions 100,000 people should buy cookery books does not exactly prove that everybody is well fed. Until we have better proofs we shall believe careful observers like Maynard who say that the great majority of the population lives on black bread, fish, cucumbers, eggs and is hardly ever able to afford tea, meat, butter and white bread.